THE MINISTER OF CIVIL AVIATION (SHRI SHARAD YADAV) : (a) to (c) The proposal to upgrade Amritsar airport to international standards was considered in the meeting of the Public Investment Board (PIB) in its meeting held on 18-8-1999. PIB recommended that though the project cannot be justified on grounds of economic viability. However, keeping in view the need of infrastructure development and to exploit the export potential of Punjab, the proposal is being placed before the Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs (CCEA). PIB also directed Airports Authority of India to conduct international passengers and cargo traffic survey which has been now conducted by AAI. A revised proposal to upgrade Amritsar airport to international standards has been approved by AAI Board and will put up to the PIB.

New Guidlines for Helicopter Operations

*351. SHRI PREM CHAND GUPTA : Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state :

(a) whether it is a fact that the New Aviation Policy will introduce new guidlines for helicopter operations without mixing them up with fixed wing operations;

(b) whether it is also a fact that this will enable them to operate more freely exploiting the advantages inherent in its operations and at the same time maintain high safety standards; and

(c) if so, by when this rationalisation is likely to come into force ?

THE MINISTER OF CIVIL AVIATION (SHRI SHARAD YADAV) : (a) to (c) Yes, Sir. The Civil Aviation Policy under formulation envisages a fresh look at the policy framework for helicopter operations, and issue of suitable guidlines in this regard. The draft policy has been widely circulated for views/comments before finalisation.

Strengthening of security at Air-ports

*352. SHRIMATI JAYAPRADA NAHATA :

SHRI AMAR SINGH :

Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state :

(a) whether it is a fact that the recent report on airport security has revealed that the Authority has not taken any serious steps to tighten the security on a number of Airports even after the highjacking of IAC Flight No. 814; and

(b) if so, the names of such Airports which are lacking security arrangements and by when remedial steps are proposed to be taken ?

THE MINISTER OF CIVIL AVIATION (SHRI SHARAD YADAV) : (a) and (b) Security arrangements at airports in India are in accordance with the standards and recommended practices laid down in Annex-17 to the convention on International Civil Aviation (Chicago) 1944 and the International Civil Aviation Organisation (ICAO) Security Manual. However, after the incident of hijacking of IC-814, following measures have been taken to further strengthen security at the airports :

(i) Deployment of Central Industrial Security Force (CISF) in place of State Police for security duties at the operational airports in a phased manner. The CISF has already taken over the security duties at Patna, Jaipur, Guwahati, Vadodara, Port Blair, Rajkot, Ranchi, Agartala, Bhopal, Hyderabad and Ahmedabad.

(ii) Frisking of passengers and hand baggage at the time of entry into sterile area has been tightened. Ladder-point secondary frisking has been introduced.

(iii) Strict control on access to the airports is being ensured by comprehensive review of Photo Identity Cards to restrict the number of pass-holders.

(iv) Deployment of Sky Marshals on flights at random basis as an added safety precaution.

(v) Raising of the perimeter wall to the prescribed height at all the operational airports.

(vi) Replacement of old X-Ray machines and installation of new colour X-Ray machines wherever necessary so as to ensure that atleast two X-Ray machines are available at every point.

(vii) Modernisation and upgradation of security related technological set up at the airports is being done in a phased manner.

Development of tourist places in Himachal Pradesh

*353. SHRI ANIL SHARMA : Will the Minister of TOURISM be pleased to state :

(a) the details of the amount spent by Government for development and maintenance of all tourist places in Himachal Pradesh during the Eighth Five Year Plan in each district of the State;